The NURSE'S STORY

BY ADELE BLENEAU

(Continued.)

It was an hour later when the order had been given for the evacuation of the hospital, and I was desperately needed that I came back to consciousness and found a little German nurse bending over me. Afterward I learned that Ian's speech and my failure to defend myself probably saved, if not our lives, certainly for the time being, our liberties, for it never occurred to the listeners that I would have accepted his denunciations unless I had been guilty.

So much had happened, so much that was supremely vital in my life, that it was only when I heard the beginning of the last fierce onslaught that I remembered Lord N. had assured me there would be an attack in force that morning. Galvanized into life by this recollection, I struggled to my feet with some half conscious idea of finding Ian. I had staggered only a few steps when the commander of the hospital called to me that all the patients had been sent away in ambulances, motors and carts except half a dozen to whom an order for evacuation would be their death warrant. To attend these men he was leaving myself and another nurse, a German sister. As he turned to go I cried out:

"And, Captain Frazer, what have you done with him?"

"Oh," he answered, with a sneer, "His highness Prince E. says you have paid for his liberty, and that if he escapes the carnage of today he is free as far as he was concerned." He looked steadily at me for a moment and then said hastily: "We have a proverb in Germany, 'When thieves fall out honest men get their dues.'" He pronounced the word honest with biting sarcasm. "A spy who was desperately wounded in getting through the lines reported that you gave false information as to the guns, but several of the flying men maintain that you had not, because they had glimpses through the snowstorm, of the guns being placed. My personal opinion is that the spy was right and that the men were subsidized by that fool, Von Schulling, who after he met you degenerated into a sentimental weakling."

"And the prince," I asked, trembling, "what did he say to this?"

"Oh, he thought that as nobody could actually prove anything his order should stand."

To my great relief, he turned on his heel and disappeared down the stairs. A moment later and his motor flashed out of sight.

The attack was becoming furious, the bullets fell on the tile roofs like hail and again and again the old chateau trembled when a shell dropped near it. The ceaseless din terrified me. I experienced physical fear for the first time in my life. I longed to fly to Ian, not to comfort him, but to be comforted, but that was impossible. He did not want me. He hated me. He had said it, and besides the thought that he ever could have so misjudged me hurt too deeply.

CHAPTER XVII.

The Final Charge.

THE little German nurse, who had remained with me, came to say that the men were needing us, they were getting into a panic. I tottered down to the big ward, trying to nerve myself to be of some help, some comfort to the men. I am afraid the effort would have been a futile one had I not found the bishop there, dressed in his robes, his figure erect, his bright, black eyes flashing. He was at once a comfort and an inspiration. Passing from one man to another, German or French, Protestant or Catholic, he had a ringing word of cheer or a gentle phrase of comfort for all. His own courage was superb. From time to time he went to the window and looked out through the glasses to see how the battle was going. Suddenly he exclaimed:

"The bayonet charge has begun! My children, the danger for us is passed!" Saint though he was, he was still human. I ran toward him and asked beseechingly:

"Father, are we winning?"

"Look!" he said in a voice rendered calm by effort, and he pushed me to the window. I adjusted the binoculars, and there came before my eyes a picture that for all time is graven on my heart. It was the last terrible attack. The Germans had placed numberless machine guns behind hundreds of barbed wire entanglements. As our men advanced, sweeping all before them with a rush, the Germans fell back and allowed them to come on with hardly a shot until they were barely a hundred yards away. Then came the rattle of machine guns and the crack of rifles.

"My God, it's madness!" I heard the bishop moan. Above the din the command of an English officer was borne to us on the breeze, one word—"Charge!" The men responded with demon-like fierceness. I covered my face with my hands and prayed, but I was drawn again by an irresistible fascination. On our men came, but for every one that advanced two fell out. With machine guns firing 750 volleys a minute how could anything live? The line wavered, but only for a moment. Once again I heard that terrible command—"Charge!" And the men with quick precision made for the gaps in the barbed wire, where by some miracle some highlanders had lived for five minutes, cutting it. The snow had ceased, and the sun came out, picking up the bayonet tips until they gleamed like burnished silver.

Then came the last supreme effort—shots at close range, a desperate rush and finally cold steel at close quarters. I had always heard the Germans could not stand against the bayonet charge. Would it prove true today? Under the deadly fire of the machine guns the English line seemed once again to waver, but only for an instant; then, seemingly out of nowhere, came a rush of black faced, white turbaned Sikhs. How they yelled! And how they charged! Nothing but death could stop them. They were so close that through the glasses we could see their eyes flashing and their teeth glistening. As if in a dream I remember hearing the bishop saying: "It is the —— Sikhs. They are avenging their captain." Involuntarily my eyes turned to the room Ian had occupied. I was dumfounded at what I saw. He was on the balcony, his head bare, his hands folded. As he stood, tall and straight, his face white as chiseled marble, he seemed detached somehow, as one watching the fearful scene from a great height. A sudden clash of sounds recalled me. The men were very

"Surely, you don't hate me."

close now. I could hear their voices. It was contagious, inspiring. I, too, was a barbarian and longed to join them. We could even hear the men shouting, "That's one for Mons!" and as an officer fell I clearly heard his last command, "Come on, you highlanders!" But high above all else was the terrible yell of the Indians. They were no longer fighting for the mad joy of battle; they were going to the rescue of their captain.

The Germans were outnumbered, beaten, and they knew it, and by dozens threw down their rifles and held up their hands. The officers tried vainly to rally their scattered troops. Captain Sindhauf rode recklessly here and there. By some strange fate he had escaped. I saw him rein up his horse and heard him call to his men "Surrender," while he himself sat calmly, revolver in hand, awaiting death.

"They may be Huns," said the bishop sadly, "but no man can say they are not brave."

An orderly came hurriedly up and asked the bishop to go downstairs. He was wanted. I turned back to my charges. A German youth called to me for brandy. He had become hysterical. I was giving it when I heard the tread of heavy steps coming up the stairs and voices calling my name. I paused to listen, amazed and rather frightened. The next moment the bishop reappeared and behind him a handful of "Tommies."

"Come, my child," he called to me, "the men want to speak to you."

Lost in wonder, I mechanically went toward them. They were outside the ward in a long corridor. I had hardly reached the door before I heard again the shout, "Sister Adele!" I looked up at the bishop questioningly, but he only smiled, patted my hand, and said to the men, "This is Sister Adele." Two of them caught me up and started down the stairs. I probably would have fainted had not the bishop kept repeating: "They are only big children, humor them, humor them!"

They carried me out on the terrace of the chateau, and at a signal gave "Three cheers for Sister Adele." I was dumfounded. Then they told me it was something about the guns. I was embarrassed, confused, humiliated, for I had really done nothing, as it turned out. When at last they left me and I pulled myself together I saw Ian leaning against a pillar gazing at me. His face was drawn and haggard. I don't remember how I got to him, but in a second I was there. I was no longer angry or even hurt. Self was completely forgotten. I was only frightened at what I saw in his face.

"Ian," I cried, "are you ill?" He did not answer, but looked at me with the most hopeless expression I had ever seen. "Surely, now that you know I didn't—you—you don't hate me?" Drawing me hastily into a little office near where we were standing, he said passionately:

"Hate you, dearest! The only hate in my heart is for myself. I have known you were innocent ever since I finished that vile tirade and you looked up at me—it was just a moment, but it was enough. I knew the truth. I rushed after you, but when halfway across the room the door closed, and I heard the key turned. Whoever had been listening had locked me in. I called to you. I pounded on the door. I rang frantically, but it was all useless. When the attack began I feared some awful thing might happen and I should never be able to tell you, to beg your forgiveness. I was beside myself. In desperation, I broke through the window and got out on the little balcony in the mad hope of attracting the attention of some one who might find you. I was still there when the final charge began."

"Weren't they glorious, superb, your Indians"—

"They are as brave as the bravest," he replied. "I love every brown face of them. But, oh, Adele, I was too heartsick at that moment to care very much one way or the other. Will you ever be able to forget, dearest, the things I said? Can a lifetime of devotion atone?"

He paused, waiting for an answer. I tried hard to think of the right thing to say, but it was hopeless. Looking up into his eyes, all the veils were lifted from my own, and for an instant I felt my very soul was bared to him.

In spite of his long illness, he had strength enough left to crush me in his arms. I felt his heart beating furiously against my own, which sounded in my ears like distant cannonading. He kissed me again and again, while I clung to him as though I feared the next moment was to separate us forever.

The next day we went to Paris, and, although the train was an hour late, Ian's father and mother were waiting for us. I was still wearing my Red Cross uniform, which, of course, was old and worn, and I rather dreaded meeting them.

We were the last to pass through the station gate, but they had been watching us for several seconds. Ian kissed his mother, who said quite calmly, but with a little catch in her voice, "It's so good to see you again, my boy." The father and son shook hands, and neither spoke, but their handclasp lasted many seconds. And then Lady L. stooped and kissed me. The father looked at me searchingly, but kindly, then, holding both my hands, said, "Well, for at least once in my life I am not disappointed."

I was so happy that I longed to kiss this dear woman who had given my Ian life, but I was afraid. Englishwomen, I had always heard, were so cold. But, yielding to an impulse, I timidly kissed her on the cheek. In a moment her arms were about me.

At lunch we discussed our immediate plans. Ian wished to be married at once, and Lord L. in a very matter of fact way said, with men being killed off like flies, he thought the sooner we were married the better.

And so it was settled. We were married in Paris, crossed the channel and quietly slipped through London—home.

The days that followed were perfect, the weather was lovely, green trees, coming spring and happiness making Ian quite well again.

Several weeks later after I had finally decided to give up nursing Ian expressed a desire to visit Meirut hospital in Boulogne, where several of his Indians were ill, and we had passed through the big wards and stopped in one of the smaller ones to speak to a wounded Sikh when the nurse lifted the basket arrangement used to cover wounded limbs and exposed a terribly shattered leg. I had seen a hundred worse cases, but in an instant I felt myself going, everything swam before me, and then all was black. The nurse instantly put a piece of cotton soaked with alcohol to my nostrils, and Ian carried me out into the air. I was myself again in a few minutes, and after making our adieus we set out in a closed cab for our hotel. Ian was silent for a time; then he said very tenderly:

"Don't you think, dear, you had better see a doctor before we leave Boulogne?"

I felt the color come to my cheeks, but I turned my face to him and we looked into each other's eyes solemnly a moment, and then out of sheer joy of it all we laughed like two children. He caught me in his arms and kissed me until I lay stilled and quiet against his heart. Outside the rain dripped and splashed against the windows of the stuffy old cab. But then, it seems to me, it is always raining in Boulogne.

THE END.

The Sun In Winter.

In winter we are 3,000,000 miles nearer the sun than in summer. Some may think that if this statement is true we ought to have warmer weather in winter than in summer, but it must be remembered that the heat we receive from the sun depends very much upon the direction of its rays. In summer the sun's rays are more vertical than in winter; hence the days are warmer.

Seek Cash to Protect Stockholm From Airship

Stockholm, April 3—A private committee has been formed here which intends to provide 700,000 kronen for the protection of Stockholm against air attack. The committee has prepared a plan of the necessary defenses, including batteries of anti-aircraft guns on the hills around Stockholm and a fleet of twenty defensive aeroplanes.

A report from Berlin says that Germany is expected to issue meat cards in a short time.

Boom In Second Hand Piano Business Is One Effect of War

London, April 3—One of the most curious results of the war is a veritable boom in the second-hand piano business. The reason for this is that the work of making munitions for the men at the front has enabled so many people to think of a piano who never thought they would own one and their added income is just enough for them to afford an old instrument.

"Less than two years ago," explained a dealer, "pianos if more than 20 years old, were a real drug on the market and many had to be sold at firewood prices. Now we dealers cannot get enough of them to sell for very fair prices. I paid a customer the same price for a piano that he paid me for it 16 years ago."

Military Attaches For Legations of Chinese Government

Peking, April 3—Military attaches are to be sent to the Chinese legations at Washington, London, Paris, Petrograd, Berlin and Tokio. The attaches will be military officials below the rank of colonel with a sufficient knowledge of foreign languages to qualify them for the posts. Some difficulty is being experienced in finding officers suitable for the places.

Ten Million Dollars To Be Spent on Panama Buildings Next Year

Panama, April 3—The Building Division of the Panama Canal has drawn plans for operations next year involving the expenditure of $10,000,000 provided Congress appropriate the money.

Plans are made for 75 new two and four family frame houses for employes; hotels at Ancon, Balboa, Balboa Shops and at Cristobal; several new school houses and about 100 small frame cottages. The largest of the new school houhes is to be built at Balboa which now is the capital of the Canal Zone. It is to be the Hhigh school and will replace the present wooden building which does not conform with the remainder of the buildings in the town.

The United States Army also contemplates the erection of many new frame buildings for quarters. The Army already has constructed many new buildings at Military heights, east of Balboa proper, and at Corozal where the cavalry, artillery and engineer detachments have their barracks.

PONY EXPRESS

The first pony express between the Missouri river and the Pacific coast was established fifty-six years ago today. The pony express was part of a mail line between New York and San Francisco. Between St. Joseph, Mo., the western terminus of the railway, and Sacramento the distance was traversed by horsemen mounted on swift and durable ponies, each of whom traveled sixty miles and then turned over his mail bags to another. The weight carried was not to exceed ten pounds, and the charge was $5 gold for each quarter of an ounce. A letter or parcel weighing an ounce, which is now carried for two cents, cost $20 in the days of the pony express. By the aid of the pony carriers the distance between New York and San Francisco was covered in 14 days—a truly remarkable performance, considering the vast distance and the character of the country covered by the brave riders. The horsemen were in constant danger in many sections of the route from hostile Indians, but they were well paid, their salary being $1,200 per month. The pony express lasted two years, but was abandoned when the telegraph line across the continent was completed.

The flood waters of the Genesee river in the streets of Rochester, N. Y., are receding, and it is believed that the flood is over.

NOTICE

BRIDGEPORT HYDRAULIC COMPANY
NO. 820 MAIN STREET

Water rates for the quarter ending April 1st, 1916, are NOW DUE and payable at the office of the Company, No. 820 Main Street. All bills must be paid on or before April 15, 1916.

Business hours on Saturdays from 8 A. M. to 12 M.

For the accommodation of the public the office will be kept open from 8 A. M. to 8 P. M. Mondays, April 3rd and 10th, 1916

ALBERT E. LAVERY, Secretary.

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STATE OF CONNECTICUT.
DISTRICT OF BRIDGEPORT, ss.
PROBATE COURT, March 23, 1916.

Estate of Michael J. McGrath, late of the town of Bridgeport, in said district, deceased.

The Court of Probate for the District of Bridgeport, hath limited and allowed six months from the date hereof for Creditors of said Estate to exhibit their claims for settlement. Those who neglect to present their accounts, properly attested, within said time, will be debarred a recovery. All persons indebted to said Estate are requested to make immediate payment to

ROBERT G. DEFOREST, Administrator,
164 State street, Bridgeport, Conn.
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England has started the process of weeding unfit men from the army.